

East Retford  
Urban District Council.

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ANNUAL REPORT

FOR

1918.

BY

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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1919.

**To the**  
**Mayor, Aldermen, & Council**  
**of the Borough of East Retford.**

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Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you my fourth annual report on the health of the Borough.

**Population.** The figure given by the Registrar General for calculating the birth rate is 13,317. He thus estimates for a decrease of 245 from last year. I am disposed to think that this figure is too low: my reasons for thinking so are that during the year there have been a large number of the families of the officers and men in the army who were billeted in and about the town. This is strengthened by the paucity of empty houses and lodgings, and by the frequency of overcrowding and by the birth rate being so much higher than

that for the country as a whole whilst the death rate approximates closely ; and it is a fact that whilst of the visitors several have had babies none have died. Calculating on this suggestion and taking the birth rate as being 17·7, approximating that for the whole country, the population would be 14,800.

For deaths, the Registrar gives the figure 11,885. This figure is estimated so as not to include men called up on military service, whereas these are included in the figures given for calculating the birth rate.

**The Births** numbered 265. Of these 142 were boys and 123 girls ; there were 26 illegitimate children born. The birth rate is therefore 19·89, a decided improvement of 1917, but one which is, I fear, too high for the reasons given above.

**Deaths.** There were 109 males and 99 females died during the year, a total of 208, giving a death rate of 17·5 per thousand population. This approximates closely to that for England and Wales as a whole. It is a considerable increase on that for last year and is accounted for to a very large extent by the epidemic of influenza which occurred in the autumn.

In relation to these birth and death rates it must be observed that owing to the absence of many of the men on military service and the migration of munition workers and their wives and families a standard rate cannot be evolved and the figures can only be approximate.

**Deaths of infants under one year** were 26 in number : 15 boys and 11 girls. The death rate per thousand births is therefore 98·2. Contrasting the rates for legitimate and illegitimate children, we find they are 88 and 154 respectively.



**Infant Welfare.** Closely connected with this question of infant mortality is that of infant welfare generally. Why should nearly one child in ten die before attaining the age of twelve months? Such a mortality is far higher than that amongst the troops on active service in the devastating war we have just been through.

More than this, we may be sure that there are a large number of infants who, although they manage to survive, are permanently damaged in health, and as a consequence, will not only be under full value to the State, but will become a burden to the community later.

The mortality and consequent ill health and expense to the community is far higher amongst the illegitimate children.

The reason for the mortality is in the main twofold. First, ill health of the mother during the prenatal period. This can be mitigated by clinics for women about to become mothers where the hygiene of pregnancy can be taught and their general health cared for.

The second cause is improper conditions after birth. The remedy is an infant welfare centre where the mothers can be instructed and the health of the children supervised and the removal of unwholesome conditions under which the children may have to live by means of better housing and the abolition of slum property.

An infant welfare centre and school for mothers has been established for some years by a Voluntary Society, the Ladies' Health Association, and has done most excellent work. Such is the importance of the subject at the present time that I strongly recommend that the Sanitary Authority should now take over the management of this instead of leaving it to a purely voluntary society who are dependant upon the charity of a few for

funds. The work is urgent and expenses are increasing and it should devolve upon the community as a whole to aid in this important matter.

An additional reason for this is the urgent problem of the care of the younger children of mothers who have to go out to work. For this a creche should be established to which the children could be brought and cared for during the day for a small sum instead of being left with a neighbour who has her own duties to attend to.

The illegitimate children should also be cared for in a creche where they can be boarded. It is most difficult to find suitable homes for them, and it is not right that these children and ultimately the community at large should suffer for no fault of their own.

Another factor in giving the child a good start in life is the condition under which the mother is confined. It would be much to the advantage of the poorer mother who is not a pauper and to the mother of a large family if she could go to some home or lying in ward, paying a reasonable fee for the same. Such a home is certainly required in Retford, and should be established by the Sanitary Authority. It would well pay for itself.

These homes are recommended by the Local Government Board in their circular of August, 1918, and they are empowered to make a grant towards their provision.



## ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

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There was a serious outbreak of **Measles** in the early part of the year, 573 cases being notified. All the schools had to be closed in consequence. Children were excluded from places of public entertainment. In this respect, I was met by the proprietor of the Picture Palace, who voluntarily excluded them at this time. Since then, an order has been issued by the Local Government Board making exclusion compulsory during the closure of any school for infectious disease. There was one death.

**Scarlet Fever** has been mild during the year. There were 26 cases in all, one being a military case.

**Diphtheria** has been slight. Seven cases were notified, of which three were military.

**Cerebro-Spinal Fever.** One case was notified in a child. The child died at the time of notification, and my enquiries did not elucidate the source of infection nor was I able to verify the diagnosis by any test.

**Ophthalmia Neonatorum.** There were three cases of this condition. All were mild and yielded to treatment



**Tuberculosis.** There were 59 cases notified : of these 42 were pulmonary and 17 non-pulmonary. Males and females nearly equal in incidence. Of pulmonary cases, 7 died, and of the non-pulmonary, one (a case of meningitis) died. The non-pulmonary cases were for the most part cases of enlarged glands.

In May a Tuberculosis Dispensary was established in the town, for the town and surrounding district, by the County Council, and your Medical Officer was appointed Assistant Tuberculosis Officer. The number of cases attending is increasing, and it will in time become a very useful Institution for the combat with this disease. A Tuberculosis Health Visitor assists at the Dispensary and visits the patients at their homes.

**Influenza.** During May and June there was a wide-spread epidemic of influenza. Although many cases occurred, they were of mild type. In October and November the town was visited by a severe epidemic, in which the cases were all much more serious. Many were accompanied by bleeding at the nose and many by severe bronchitic complications and pneumonia.

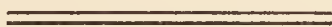
The incubation period was usually about 48 hours when the acute symptoms appeared consisting of high temperature, general malaise, pains all over the body and limbs, sore throat, and sometimes nose bleeding. Cough was frequent and tracheal in nature accompanied by severe pain in the chest. After about the fifth day the pneumonic symptoms appeared. These did not as a rule resemble classical acute pneumonia, but rather an intense bronchiolitis with much very viscid mucus filling the air cells and smaller tubes of one or more lobes and giving rise to pneumonic symptoms.

Expectoration was long continued and consisted of very viscid purulent mucus, grey or yellow in colour. The tongue was always coated. Particularly noticeable was a peculiar foetor which emanated from the body and was not confined to the breath.

There were a few cases of heliotrope coloration. These were invariably fatal.

Altogether there were 44 deaths certified as due to influenza. Bronchitis and pneumonia accounted for 15 and 19 respectively, and without doubt some of these were influenzal in origin. The death rate of cases certified as influenza was 3·74 per thousand of population : taking all three causes together they account for a rate of 6·54 per thousand and 37·7 per cent. of the deaths from all causes.

Efforts were made to provide home helps for families stricken with the disease, but the difficulty was experienced that the epidemic was so general that there was practically no one available for the purpose.



The Isolation Hospitals are Arlington House for scarlet fever and an occasional case of diphtheria where it is impossible to isolate at the patient's home, and Grove Lane Hospital, built originally for small pox cases but opened occasionally for epidemics of other diseases. Arlington House is not suitable for an Isolation Hospital on account of its structure and arrangement and also of its position in the centre of the town. Furthermore, it is useful only for one disease at a time. Now that the war is over it is to be hoped that the new hospital, the plans of which have been approved, will be built as soon as practicable.



**Drainage.** There are still houses not connected with the drainage system but for which pails are used. Work in this direction has been slower than formerly on account of the difficulty in getting labour during the war. A full report on the work done is furnished by the Borough Surveyor.

**Housing.** The housing accommodation is defective for the needs of the town. There is a great scarcity of houses and too much overcrowding. In addition to this there are many houses which do not attain to the modern standard of what is necessary, and not a few which are decidedly unfit for habitation. The latter should be demolished absolutely and new and better houses built where the site is suitable. The former should be repaired and altered to fit in with modern requirements. This work has been hindered during the past four years and there is much lee way to make up.

Before anything can be done it is necessary to provide more accommodation, and this is being done. A scheme is being drawn up by the architect appointed for the purpose which will be submitted to the Local Government Board for sanction under the general housing scheme. It is proposed to erect 150 houses to commence with, and it is hoped others will be built by private enterprise. As soon as these houses are provided the insanitary house property should be closed, but until then very little is possible.

There are certain districts in the town where the houses are too much crowded together, and an improvement scheme should be considered. I hope to refer to this at a future date.

**Workshops** are kept in reasonably good condition. A complaint was received from the Factory Inspector as to the sanitary accommodation of two workplaces, where

both women and men were employed. A lengthy correspondence ensued ; the women were employed temporarily only and it was not felt justifiable to saddle the owners with the expense of considerable extra drainage. Temporary accommodation was provided to meet the case.

**Dairies and Cowsheds.** We are far behind some foreign countries in the way these are kept, but no actual nuisance has occurred.

**Infectious Diseases Prevention Act.** Several dirty houses have been dealt with under this act and the premises cleansed.

**Meat Inspection.** My attention has been called to several cases of meat unfit for human consumption or suspected to be so. In all of these it was the butcher himself who communicated with the police who called for my opinion. One case was of a carcase with general tuberculosis and which had been sent to the town by the meat control. Some of the cases were those of foreign meat which had an unpleasant appearance compared with the good meat the town was accustomed to before the rationing but otherwise healthy. When the meat was unfit for food it was seized and destroyed. No case of the exposure of diseased meat for sale occurred.

**Bye-laws** are in force concerning building and drainage, removal of refuse, nuisances, dairies and cowsheds.

The Public Health Amendment Act, 1890, and Sections 36 and 38 of 1907 have been adopted, also the Notification of Births Act, 1907.

In view of the probable increase in the size of the town in the near future owing to the development of collieries, the need for a revision of the bye-laws and the adoption of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907, Parts I to VI is advisable.

Appended to this are the reports of the Borough Surveyor, the Inspector of Nuisances, and the Inspector of Slaughter-houses, and two Tables (Life and Infectious Disease Statistics).

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HANWAY R. BEALE.

Retford,

April, 1919.



# CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING 1918.

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Month	Enteric	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria and Croup	Erysipelas	Tuberculosis	Cerebro Spinal Fever	Ophthalmia Neonatorum
January ...		26	2		4 (1 Military)	3	9		1
February ...		90	1			2	5	1	1
March ...		111			1 (Military)	1	4		
April ...		124	1 (Military)		1 (Military)	2	9		
May ...		149	10			3	4		
June ...		45	1			3	7		1
July ...		19	1		1	1	3		
August ...		4	5			4	8		
September...	2 (1 German)						4		
October ...			2			1	4		
November ...		2				1	0		
December ...	1 (1 Rotheln)		3				2		
Total ...		573	26		7	21	59	1	3

TABLE OF  
CAUSES OF DEATH IN EAST RETFORD M.B. IN 1918.

CAUSES OF DEATH.					Males.	Females.	Total.
ALL CAUSES (Civilians only) ...					109	99	208
1	Enteric fever	...	...	...	...	...	...
2	Small pox	...	...	...	...	...	...
3	Measles	...	...	...	...	1	1
4	Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	2	1	3
6	Diphtheria	...	...	...	1	...	1
7	Influenza	...	...	...	15	29	44
8	Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	...
9	Pulmonary tuberculosis	...	...	...	7	6	13
10	Tuberculous meningitis	...	...	...	1	1	2
11	Other tuberculous diseases	...	...	...	1	2	3
12	Cancer, malignant disease	...	...	...	5	4	9
13	Rheumatic fever	...	...	...	1	...	1
14	Meningitis	...	...	...	1	...	1
15	Organic heart disease	...	...	...	11	4	15
16	Bronchitis	...	...	...	10	5	15
17	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	12	7	19
18	Other respiratory disease	...	...	...	1	1	2
19	Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	2	2
20	Appendicitis and Typhlitis	...	...	...	...	...	...
21	Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	...	2	2
21a	Alcoholism	...	...	...	...	...	...
22	Nephritis and Bright's disease	...	...	...	1	1	2
23	Puerperal fever	...	...	...	...	...	...
24	Parturition	...	...	...	...	1	1
25	Congenital Debility	...	...	...	6	5	11
26	Violence	...	...	...	3	...	3
27	Suicide	...	...	...	...	1	1
28	Other defined diseases	...	...	...	31	26	57
29	Cause illdefined or unknown	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cerebro spinal fever ...					1	...	1
Poliomyelitis ...					...	...	...
Infants under one year ...					15	11	26
TOTAL BIRTHS ...					142	123	265
Legitimate ...					126	113	239
Illegitimate ...					16	10	26

## RETFORD BOROUGH.

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*Annual Report of the Borough Surveyor and Inspector  
of Nuisances and Housing to the Medical Officer  
of Health.*

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Sir,

I beg to submit a short report for 1918.

**Housing Works.** Practically none. Several final tests made.

**Building Progress.** Chiefly alterations and additions to existing buildings. Work of conversion of maltkilns, Hospital Road, into four cottages commenced.

**Inspections** made 954, principally concerning nuisances, infectious disease prevention, new drainage, and conversions.

**Rainfall.** Recorded at Bolham, 25·01 ins. in 206 days (last year 21·65 ins. in 183 days). Heaviest rainfall in one day, ·72 in. on August 3rd. Retford average for last 5 years, 26·22 ins. on 195 days.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. D. KENNEDY.



## Report of Inspector of Meat.

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County Police Station,  
Retford, Notts.

31st October, 1918.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to report for your information that during the past year I have inspected the Butcher's and Fishmonger's Shops in the Borough on Thursdays and Saturdays, and found the meat killed in this town and the fish exposed for sale have been of excellent quality, but some of the chilled beef has been very inferior and badly bruised in transit, in fact, two fore quarters were seized, one on the 11th May at Mr. Gyles' shop, and one on the 22nd August at Mr. Spray's shop, in consequence of their being unfit for food.

I also seized at Mr. Burton's slaughterhouse, Churchgate, two carcasses of beef, one on the 10th July, and one on the 19th July, as both were badly affected with tuberculosis, all of which were condemned and destroyed.

In neither of the above cases were proceedings instituted, as the butchers asked me to examine the meat before it was exposed for sale.

I have also inspected the slaughterhouses regularly and found nothing to complain of in the way they are kept, or in the way the animals are slaughtered.

During the same period I have inspected at the Cattle Market Slaughterhouse, two carcasses of beef, two of veal, and six of mutton, all of which I passed with the exception of one of beef which was taken away and destroyed.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. VALPY THOMAS,

Meat Inspector.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors  
of the Borough of East Retford.

